

C. No 48

satisfactory

An
Inaugural Essay

on
Pyrexia

For
The degree of Doctor of Medicine

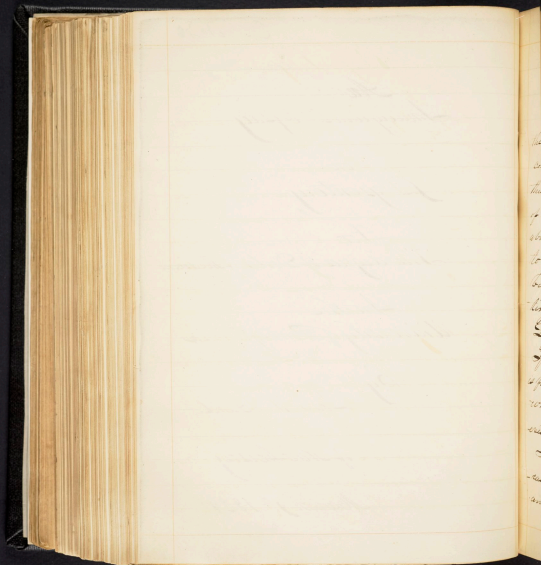
In the
University of Pennsylvania

By
Isaac W. Hunt

of New Jersey

March 2^d 1829

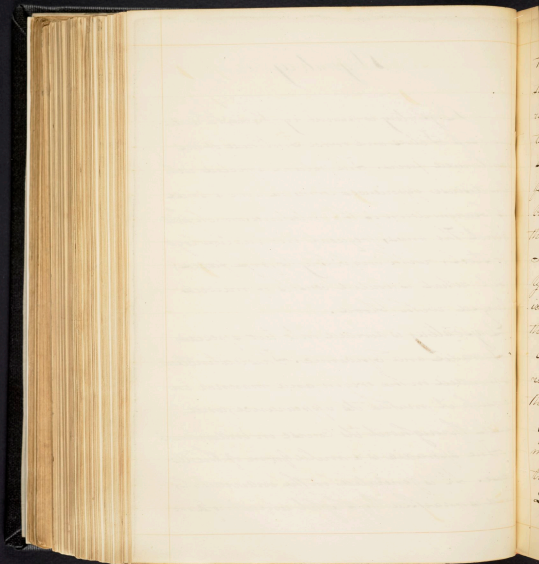
No 211 Arch St



Dysentery

Dysentery is placed by Hornet under the class Febris and cordis Continuae of the continued fevers. The patient affected with this disease experiences tormina and a sense of bearing down of the intestines, much heat about the anus, frequent inclination to go to stool, with inability to pass feces; but what is voided consists of mucus & tinged with blood.

Dysentery is divided into two species, Sporadic and Epidemic. This distinction is founded on the origin and manner in which it makes its appearance, and exists throughout its course in individuals. The sporadic is a mild form of the disease. It is generated in the individual, and is marked by slight uneasiness in

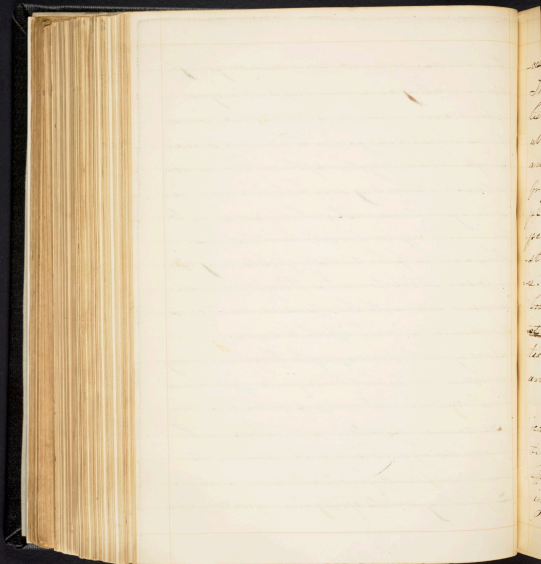


The bowels, pain and tenderness on pressure
shot, restless and mucous discharges,
which are mixed with blood, and some-
times impeded feces. Fever and uneasiness
continuing, the system becomes af-
fected, the standing sore hot and throbs fe-
brile symptoms exist; which are owing to
the irritating contents of the intestines.

This species of the disease yields very easily
to simple treatment. Purgative med-
icines to evacuate the offensive matter of
the intestines will effect a cure.

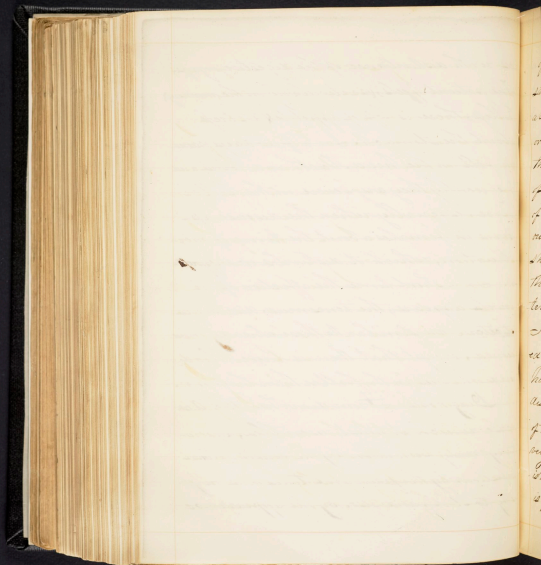
Among the common people there are many
remedies for it, and these quite opposite in
their nature and mode of operation.

Epidemic dysentery is attended with
much danger, being obstinate in its
treatment and quick in its termination.
Dysentery in its epidemic form common

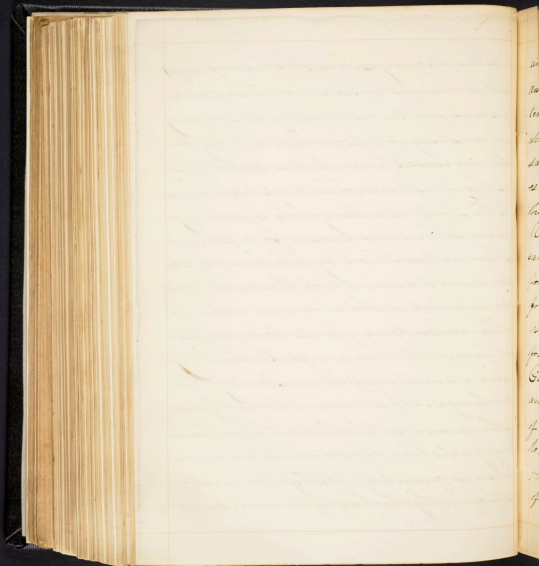


ness with disturbance of the digestive organs. The patient feels, particularly in the morning, listless; there is loss of appetite & distress about the stomach. In a few days pains are felt in the head, back and loins and frequently they are severe in the latter place, especially when the disease appears in females about the time of menstruation, which it disturbs or suppresses. In a short time the affection of the bowels appears; the tenesmus, discharges ~~et cetera~~ are similar to those already mentioned, except that there is more blood and mucus in the latter than the former.

Diagnosis. From diarrhoea the disease which it most resembles, dysentery may be known by the constitutional affection, by the pain and tenesmus on going to stool, and also, by the appearance



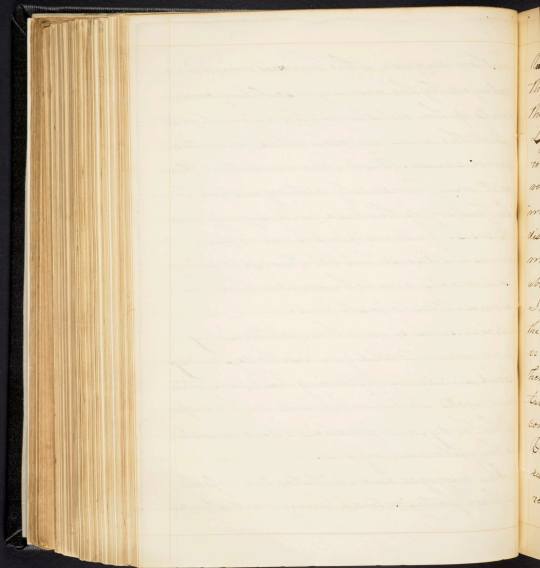
of the discharges, consisting here of inspissated mucus mixed with blood, and also, of matter resembling the scraping or washing of guts; which is owing to the increased and vitiated secretions of the intestines. The dark appearance of the stools resembling bile is probably owing to the same cause, for dissections show natural looking bile and feces in the duodenum, while this dark matter is found in the colon and rectum. The mesenteric glands being diseased here, as in cholera infantum, may have a similar effect in colouring the discharges. This occurs in the early stage of the disease until the irritation becomes very great; then, the secretions are diminished in quantity; fleshy-like matter is frequently discharged, which, some



authors suppose, is the mucous membrane
destroyed by the eroding or scalding con-
tents of the intestines; the external parts
about the anus are excoriated from the
same cause. From haemorrhoidal flux-
es it may be readily distinguished by
the history of the case and symptoms.
Causes. On board of vessels and in jails
damps this disease has been traced to eating
foul meats, and to the sudden changes
from salted to fresh food.

viciflitudes of weather, particularly
from warm to cold give rise to dysentery.
Cold, suddenly following heat, constricts
and locks up the exhalants on the surface
of the body, and produces a determination
to the internal organs.

This engorges and irritates the vessels
of these parts, which being over distended

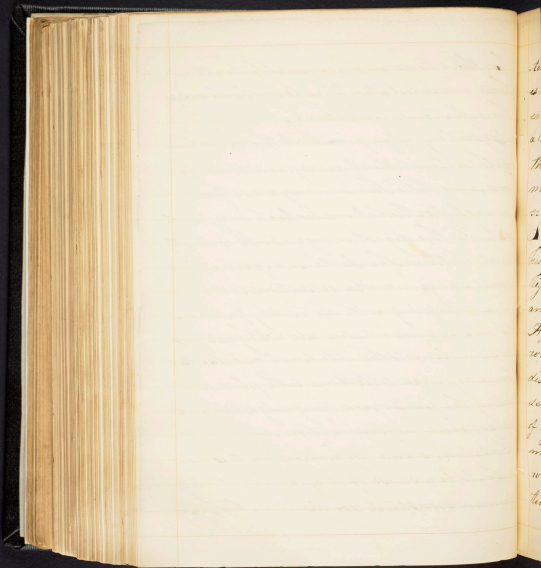


lose their tone and are unable to act on their accumulated fluids, which escape the exhalents unaltered.

Dysentery often prevails at the same time with intermittent and remittent fevers, and these them may arise from marshy exhalations, which very much disturb the digestive organs. It is mostly met with in the South and, particularly about damp and cold situations.

Thus interfering with the healthy functions, the bile becomes vitiated not acting as a proper stimulant to the intestinal exhalents; hence depraved collections take place, irritating the parts, producing congestion and consequent inflammation.

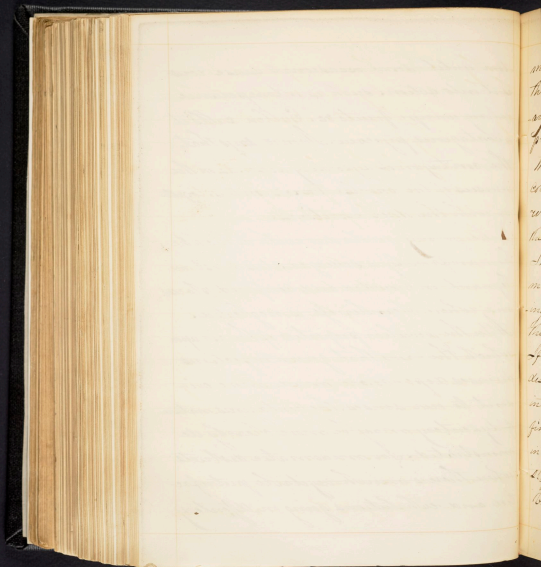
Contagion, is said by writers on this disease, to be a cause of it and that it may remain sometimes dormant in the sys-



tem until some occasional cause rouses it into action: such as intemperance, eating unripe fruits &c. Cullen calls it a contagious dysentery. More says that the contagion of dysentery depends on the mucus of the bowels, mixed, in this together with the other excretions.

Like many maladies with which the human family is scourged, it is most malignant in crowded and confined places, and where cleanliness is neglected.

After the peculiar properties of the air, upon which the laws that govern infectious diseases depend, are made more evident to our senses, the contagious nature of dysentery may be more clearly demonstrated. In miasmatic districts where there is much visible putrefaction and exhalations going on, dysentery

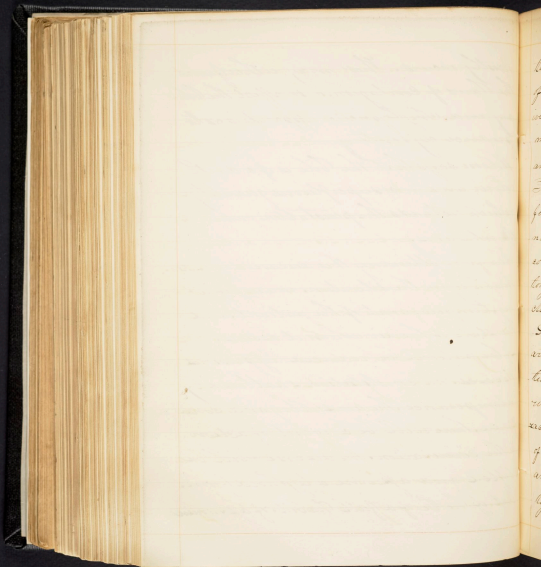


mostly occurs. These may either favour
the flours of contagion, or so affect the bili-
ary and chylific poietic apparatus as to
produce dysentery.

Wilson says that the bile is of a dark
colour and in a superfluous quantity,
which retards the peristaltic motion of
the intestines.

The fever attending this disease depends
much upon the situation, manner of living, &
temperament of the patient, and
the state of the air when it occurs.

If the patient be weakened by previous
diseases, his constitution shattered by
intemperance, the air sultry and con-
fined, there will be a want of action
in the circulation, the disease will be
diffuse and assume a typhoid form.
But if he be of a full habit, of a sanguine,



temperament, enjoying a free circulation of air in the country, there will be active action, and the fever will be of an inflammatory form, with marked exacerbations and remissions.

Prognosis. Soft full pulse, abatement of fever with a moist skin showing a determination to the surface; stools of a natural colour and consistence; diminution of pain, tongue moist and cleaning, or disposed to clean off are favourable.

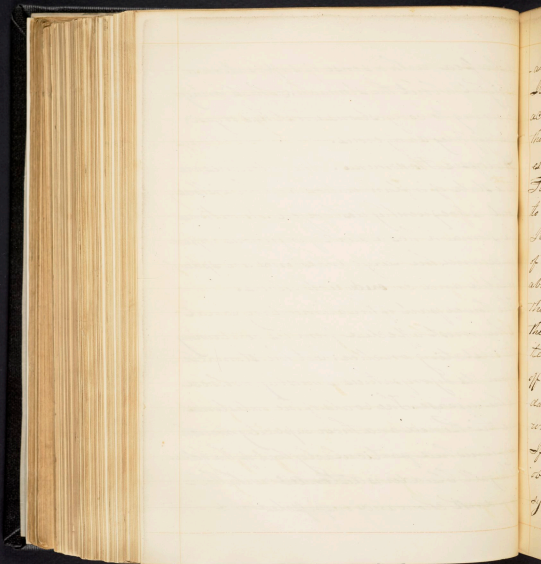
A small pulse with the pulse of the artery much contracted and tense; partial and clammy sweats; dry tongue with much heat in the mouth; stercoreous vomiting arising from inversion of the peristaltic motion of the intestines are unfavourable. The patient being not kept, complaining of no pain, although

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distressed with a sense of suffocation or weight about the stomach. (which may be owing to congestions about this organ) are highly dangerous.

Autopsic Phenomena. The intestines are in a state of inflammation and the villous coat is frequently destroyed. Sometimes the stomach has a dark gangrenous appearance and the large intestines are sphacelated and covered with ulcers.

The lower part of the alimentary canal is the most affected from its containing the irritating matter: but the stomach from its sympathy is mostly involved in the disease. The coats of the intestines are thickened and their capacity much diminished particularly that of the colon. The gall bladder is distended with bile of a dark colour and inspissated and



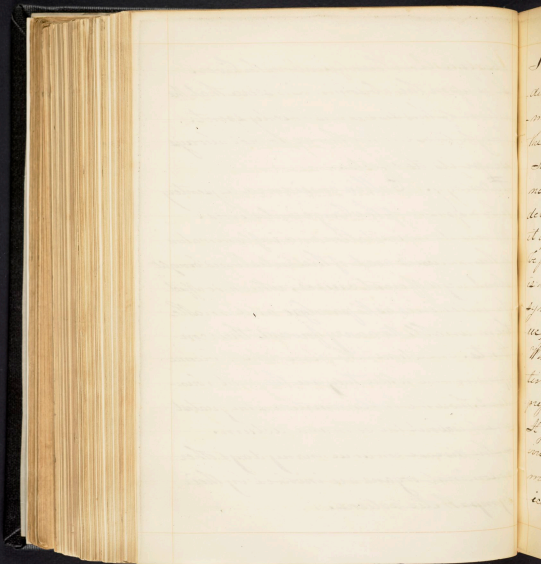
abscesses have been found in the liver.

It is upon the abdominal viscera that the action of this disease is chiefly spent; though those of the thorax do not always escape its effects.

Pathology. Cullen considered dysentery to be a spasm of the large intestines.

It consists in irritation and inflammation of the mucous coat of the intestines, brought about by different causes, which so affect the intestines as to paralyze and make them unable to carry forward their contents. Colications take place, which become offensive and when they are the most abundant, there the inflammation is the greatest, which is about the colon and rectum.

If the disease continue many days, other abdominal organs are involved by their sympathetic actions.

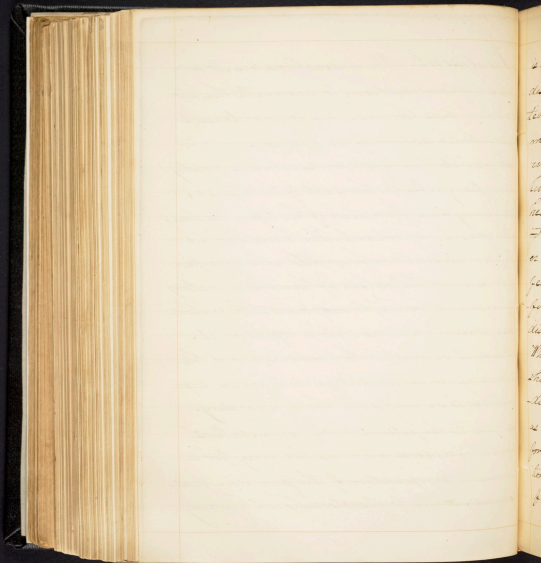


Treatment. The indications are, to sub-
due inflammation, to evacuate the sto-
mach and bowels, and to counteract
the febrile action of the system.

To fulfill the first, venesection is mostly
necessary. From the seat of the disease,
delicacy and function of the liver insures
it appears important. The blood should
be permitted to run until an impression
is made on the pulse. If the inflammatory
symptoms be high and pains still contin-
ue, good effects arise from repeating it.

When it occurs with females about the
time of menstruation and causes sup-
puration, bleeding is the more necessary.

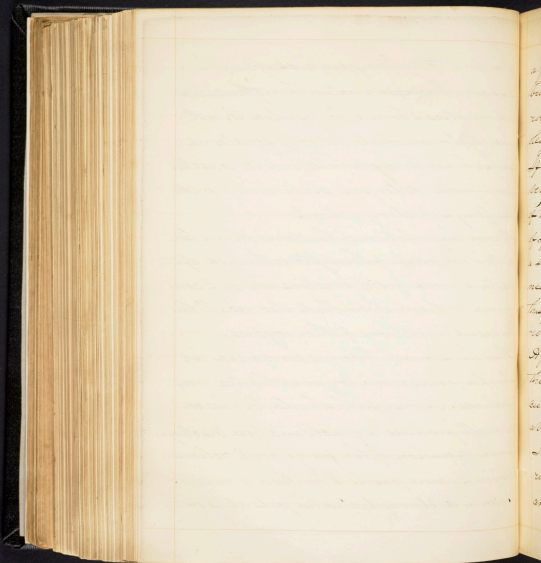
It gives to the patient early relief, calms
irritation, and prepares the way for a
more easy operation of the purgative med-
icines. After venesection, local bleeding



is useful to relieve pain and subdue the disease. Increased action being thus obtained, emetics should be resorted to, not merely to evacuate the fecal secretions which are thrown on into ^{the stomach}, but to rouse the liver from its torpid state and promote healthy secretory action.

From the relation of the stomach and liver to other parts of the system, the good effects derived from emetics are not confined to them alone; but also recall the diseased functions of other organs.

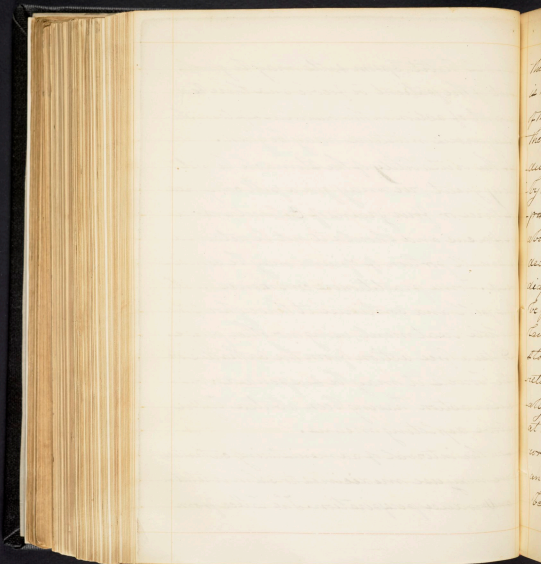
When the stomach becomes congested, we should endeavor to give cathartic medicines. Of these such should be chosen as will produce a quick and free discharge, for the operation of the purge will relieve tormina and pain. If now there is much febrile excitement, and the patient is of



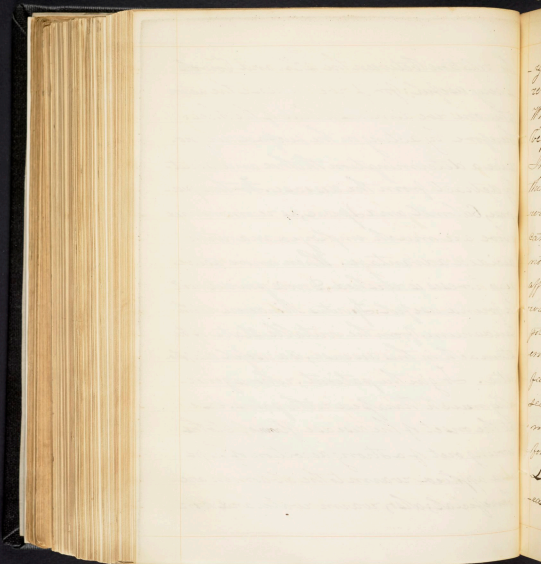
a full habit, Spasm Latta may be given.
but if the patient be feeble and there be a
want of action in the vascular system, the
diagonous mixture may be given.

If the irritability of the Stomach be not
very great, we may give a pill composed
of three or four grains of Colocol and one
of Opium, and should it not be retained,
a small portion of opium may be combin-
ed. Some practitioners commence with
this pill and continue it throughout the
whole treatment, using no other purge.
After a free action from the cathartic or
the Cough, it may be suspended: vas-
cular action having been abated by the
above depleting means.

In the interval of administering cathartics,
we may use medicines to calm irritation
and produce perspiration. The latter from



the relation between the Skin and Lungs
is very useful: for if we increase the action
of the one we diminish that of the other;
therefore by acting on the surface we pro-
duce a determination thither and direct-
ly detract from the disease. For this pur-
pose, Calomel and Spurge, as recommended
above, are much employed and with
decided advantage. When more active
diaphoresis is required, Dover powder will
be found useful. Spiritus Mindereri with
Caudarium, from the irritable state of the
Stomach in this disease, is a useful diapho-
retic. To give the patient, who is gener-
ally much tormented with pains, ease
at the onset of the disease flannel cloths
wrung out of a strong decoction of hops
and applied warm to the abdomen are
beneficial; also, warm water and wine

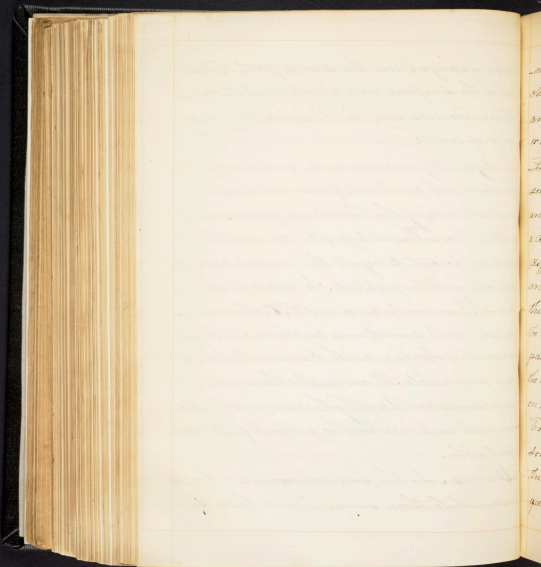


-gar spunged over the same part. These
relax the surface and direct irritation.

When leeches can be obtained, they may
be preferable.

In dysentery, nausea and uneasiness at
the stomach continue for some time, not-
withstanding the bowels are opened on ly
cathartics. This distress of the stomach, though
not sufficient to reject the medicines, is very
afflicting to the patient. To relieve it Soda
water, Lime water and milk, Carbonate of
potash with sometimes success: But an
emetic of Spices with Camomile Tea is
far preferable. It evacuates the morbid
secretions constantly thrown into the sto-
mach and renders the patient quite com-
fortable.

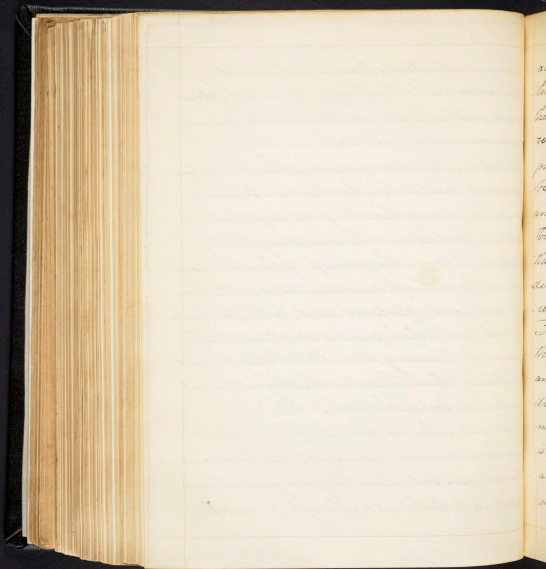
Drinks. In the commencement of the dis-
ease, while there is much force, these re-



mand attention. None of a stimulating character are to be allowed, the most grateful and suitable are cool acidulated drinks, or some mild herb tea.

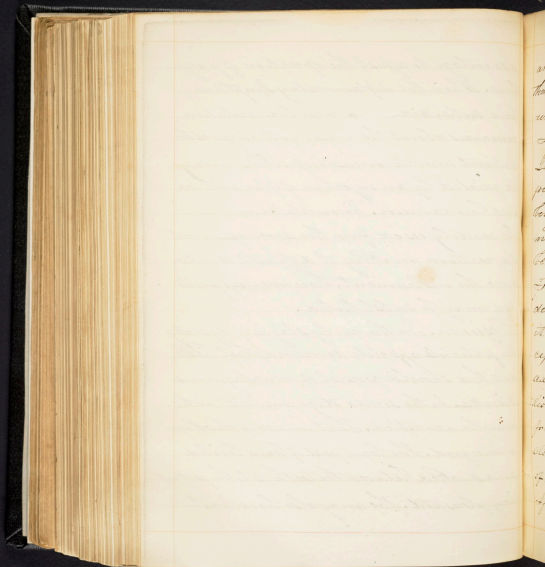
Blister. If, after considerable evacuations, soreness continue, the abdomen be tumid and hard, and there be pain, on pressure, of a deep seated and lancinating kind, (different from the soreness of the abdominal muscles, which sometimes results from the frequent efforts at stool), a Blister should be applied, where pain is most acute. The pain continuing, it will be better to repeat the Blister, than to use irritating ointments on the blistered surface.

Enemata. In the early stage of the disease, some recommend injections to evacuate the bowels; but alone they are generally inadequate to the end, though of much



advantage he assist the operation of purgatives. When the inflammatory symptoms have subsided, a morbid irritation remains about the anus, which gives the patient much uneasiness. This may be quelled by an injection of *Plas secia* tea and *Caudanum*. Enemata cannot here be readily used, from the soreness about the rectum making it difficult to introduce the instrument, therefore suppositories may be substituted.

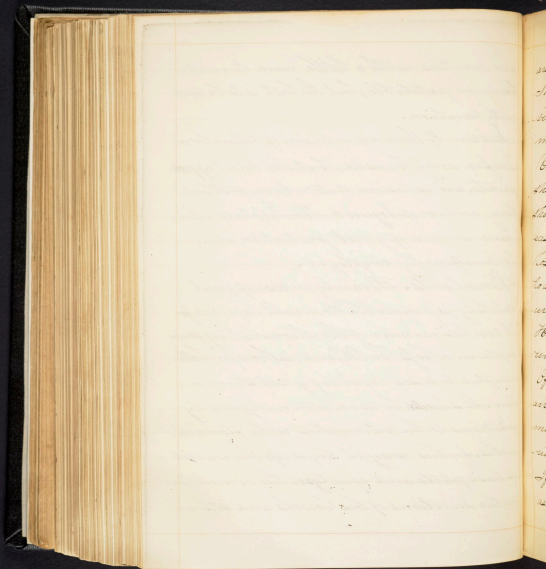
Regimen. In the early stages of dysentery, the patient's appetite remains but little, and this should consist of mucilaginous drinks. In the second stage, animal broths may be admitted. That made of chicken is very good. The lean part of ham broiled and sucked between the teeth is to the patient very pleasant. He may also have toast



and crackers, with a little wine to make them more palatable; but the last is to be used with caution.

Infus. Of these an infusion of Columbo or Quapia may be used, but the most appropriate, are infusions of Saw berry or Blackberry root, or of Logwood. The Sulphate of Quinine, in case of great prostration, may be beneficially employed.

Stimulants. Brandy, in case of great debility, is preferable to small liquors, for it contains more of the stimulating principle in a less bulk, and is, therefore, better adapted to cases requiring great stimulation. It should be used internally, and by frictions to the extremities, with the flannel cloth. In this way, it keeps up the warmth of these parts and equalizes the circulation. If the secretions of the bowels and skin

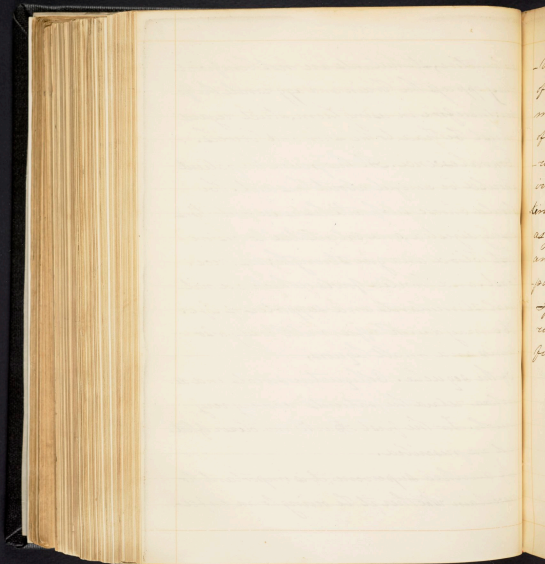


an inactive, stimulants are not beneficial. They oppress the brain and aggravate the fever; therefore in using them, strict regard must be had to the skin and bowels.

Convalescence. At this period the patient should be careful about his diet. He should choose such articles as are nutritious, easily digested, and calculated to restore lost blood and give strength; viz, rice, toast, and broiled fowls, which are natural stimulants and supporters of life. He may drink coffee, milk toddy, also wines and small liquors,

Of the sequelæ. Colliquative sweats and diarrhoea retard the patients recovery very much. In the first, Bark and Oiler of Cit. acid are prescribed.

If diarrhoea supervene, it is important to ascertain whether it be owing to an infec-



-Blea state of the bowels, or to irritation
of these parts. In the former situation, it
may be treated by frictions to the surface
of the body, and by the flannel roller a-
round the abdomen. If it be owing to
irritation, opiate enemata will some-
times be useful, or what is equally
as good, the tincture of ~~St. James's~~ ^{St. James's} ~~Wine~~ ^{Wine}, Galls
and Opium combined varying the pro-
portions as the case may require.

If acidity exist in the primæ viæ, Lime-
water and Milk will be found use-
ful —

